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THOMPSON, T.



Doctor *Thomson*  
VINDICATED.

[Price Sixpence.]



Doctor Thomas

VINDICATED

[Price 5pence]

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# Doctor Thomson VINDICATED.

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## Curfory Reflections

On the CASE of the Rt. Hon.

*Thomas Winnington, Esq;*

Lately published by Dr. Thomson ; and the  
Letters in Answer to him, by Campbell,  
Douglas, Dowman, &c.

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*Addressed to a MEMBER of PARLIAMENT.*

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L O N D O N :

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Doctor Thomson

VINDICATED

Contra Reflections

By Thomas W. Higginson

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THE INSTITUTION

1871

THE INSTITUTION



# Doctor Thomson

VINDICATED.



ALL the several adventurers  
for fame and food, who  
have made their court to  
the faction in phyfic, at  
the expence of Dr. Thomson, have  
agreed with him, ' That the Wel-  
' fare of Mankind so intimately  
' depends on a right practice in  
' phyfic, that it is certainly the  
' duty of every professor to expose  
B ' all

‘ all deviations from it.’ And consequently it is the duty of *every man* to look about him.

As I am no physician, I shall not pretend to take upon me to consider or examine how far the method of practice, and discipline in physic, contended for by Dr. *Thomson*, is consistent with the laws prescribed by the college. But as ‘ the welfare of mankind is intimately concerned in having the best practice and discipline established,’ I could heartily wish that important affair were judged worthy the consideration of our legislature, and that a law might be enacted in favour of that discipline in physic, which, on a thorough enquiry, should appear to be best founded on reason, and judged to be most for the general utility.

My

My immediate business shall however be, to consider from what motives these disputes have arisen, since people in general begin to be alarmed, and all men of sense have for a long time suspected, not only the rectitude of the common practice, but also even the integrity of some of our practisers in physic.

Dr. *Thomson* complains, that scandalous slanders have been industriously propagated against his conduct on the death of Mr. *Winnington*, whom he had the honour to attend, and says, ‘ He is not insensible from  
 ‘ what quarter these poisoned arrows  
 ‘ are shot, private interest evidently  
 ‘ points out the assassins; nor is it  
 ‘ to be wondered, when the shrines  
 ‘ are in danger, that the workmen  
 ‘ should clamour in support of the  
 ‘ *craft.*’

This expression, it seems, has given much offence to those who have their *living* by that craft, and even to those who only hope to live by it: The former, as being already in the administration, have dictated; and the latter, as having nothing else to do, have held the pen, in a persuasion, that the province they defend, will in time be their reward.

The administration in physic is in the hands of a few physicians, with their allies their apothecaries, who have pronounced themselves, and their disciples, to be the *only* physicians, and that all the rest besides, who aspire to that name, know nothing, if compared to them; or, what is worse, so little, that they are only qualified to practise on the credulity of their patients.

When the young physician comes  
first



first to town, having been at a great expence in his education, in order to reap the fruits of his labour and studies, he naturally considers which is the best method of making himself known, and of getting into the exercise of his profession. And the first information he receives, is, that he must fill his censer with incense, and prostrate himself before the idols of *Warwick-Lane*. And secondly, That most families are under the direction of some apothecary, who prescribes himself, and sends in what drugs and medicines he thinks proper from his own shop, till he has reason to apprehend the patient will die ; and then he holds it expedient to call in a physician, resigned enough for the sake of a fee, and Mr. apothecary's farther recommendation, to bear the reproach of his death. And how shocking soever this news may be, or how incredible

credible it may seem to a gentleman of spirit and integrity, and whatever resolution of practice he may have taken, he will at length find that the news is true, and that he must take to the highway of physic, or be undone.

I am informed, that Dr. *Thomson* is one of those physicians, that has had the resolution to reject all such vile proposals, and the courage to break thro' this rule ; honestly sacrificing his own private interest to the public good, by exposing the craft in the present practice, and by endeavouring to pull down this tyranny in physic.

It is indeed amazing, that the learned gentlemen of the *faculty* will not be sensible of the great advantages they would receive by joining  
with

with him in endeavouring to remove the grievances they now labour under : For, *in reality, the contest is not so much between Dr. Thomson and the rest of the faculty,* as between the doctor and many of the apothecaries, in conjunction with *those prostitute physicians, who are basely influenced by their power and interest in families.* It is no wonder at all, that these physicians and apothecaries should so loudly complain of the reformation aimed at by Dr. Thomson, since it has, to my knowledge, more than once happened, that when those artists have over-night directed their journey-men to make ready twenty bolus's, out of the same pot, they have been directed by the doctor to throw them out of the window the next day, and the patient advised to drink a little *Acton* water, and to go

go abroad about his business. But altho' instances of this kind are notorious, they are artfully concealed by *some other physicians*, because, the apothecary has the keys of the family committed to his care, and consequently, that physician can only be admitted, who approves of his judgment, who justifies the use of many medicines, by prescribing more himself, and who thereby puts more money into the apothecary's pocket than his own.

But to return to *Dr. Thomson's* opponents: I suspect the principal reason of their appearing in opposition to him, is, that they well know, if the victory should be on his side, such a revolution in practice would follow, as would reduce most of their shops to the condition  
of

of that described by *Shakespear*; the doctor having already declared, that the reformation he aims at, is *to ease the expence of the patient, and to promote the real science of medicine.* And indeed I am inclined to believe, that THE SHRINES ARE NOW REALLY IN DANGER, since the railings and slanders of certain physicians against Dr. *Thomson*, which were before only in private, are now changed into public scurrilities and invectives; and yet they would have the town to believe, that they do not think him worth contending with. If that were the case, for God's sake, why all this rancour against him? Why is so much paper wasted, to expose, to persecute, and, if possible, to run him down? Is it out of tendernefs to their fellow-creatures? If it is, it is the only sign of tendernefs they

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shew them. Will they say it is the result of any particular regard to Mr. *Winnington*? If they will, how, or among whom, will they find belief? For if they have no charity for those they live by, how can it be supposed that they feel any compassion for one who, from his personal knowledge of the proudest of them, refused to trust his life in their hands? And who, in the course of his illness often declared, that if *Thomson* was at the end of his judgment, he was at the end of his days. In short, would they speak out, it would appear, that they rather dread than despise this *one man*, who has dared to set himself in opposition to the *craft*, and for that only reason is, if possible, to be run down.

Thus, if Mr. *Winnington* had recovered

covered, it is reasonable to think their rage would have increased with their envy; and the less it had been in their power, the more they would have endeavoured it.

It is evident, the contention is not about any one particular case, but the present practice and discipline, which he labours to correct for the general good, and which, by experience, they find is not in the least calculated for the private interest of a set of men, who aim only at amassing immense fortunes, and who fatten, without remorse, on the miseries they pretend to cure.

Having thrown together these hasty thoughts on the controversy in general, I cannot help taking particular notice of a passage or two in one *Douglas's* letter, wherein he

says, that though the sense of the introduction to Mr. *Winnington's* case, and the winding it up, is Dr. *Thomson's*, the stile and diction are evidently another's, as any one may perceive that will give himself the trouble of reading his book on the gout; and from whence he concludes that because the whole performance is universally commended and approved, and shews the author to be a man of sense, and a scholar, it cannot be Dr. *Thomson's*.

I have no personal knowledge of Mr. *Douglas*, nor do I desire to have any; for a disingenuous foe can never make a cordial friend. Every man that takes up a pen to entertain the public, or rather to set forth his own sufficiency, ought to know, that a master of stile can assume what shape and character



character he pleases, and appear with propriety in all: but that is a secret to Mr. *Douglas*, and I am afraid will ever continue so. Those who are acquainted with him, do him the justice to say, that whoever prompted the matter of his tract against Dr. *Thomson*, the manner is his own; and I shall not attempt to rob him of any part of the honour he has acquired by it.

Dr. *Thomson* will excuse me, I hope, if I congratulate him on his being attacked by such an adversary, and that I lament that having mentioned the doctor's excellent treatise of the gout, he did not undertake to confute it. His business was to abuse the doctor; and though Mr. *Winnington's* case happened to be his immediate subject, any other  
would

would have answered his end as well. \*

Those who set him on, and who growl at Dr. *Thomson* in corners, without daring to worry him in person, would have been yet farther obliged to him.

In that treatise of his, the doctor has undertaken to prove, 1. That the gout is an inflammatory disease. 2. That it ought to be treated like all other inflammatory cases. 3. And that all systems and hypotheses were the bane of physic.

Here therefore was a notable opening to make his court to some of the great rabbi's of the college, as well

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\* Either the late Mr. *Pope's*, or Sir *John Eyles's*.

well as to those apothecaries their co-operators ; they have maintained the contrary doctrine, and pursued the contrary practice ; and that they have done so, is, no doubt, sufficient to argue that they are in the right.

Why then did the officious Mr. *Douglas* (who has made himself so busy with the case of a gentleman, whom I have reason to think he had never the honour to approach,) pass it over, without a farther manifestation of those extraordinary talents which he seems to be so vain of ? Why, truly, many of those great rabbies, who used to sneer at Dr. *Thomson*, as often as he was named, were at last convinced of the error which they had so long persevered in ; and adopted the very method of practice which they had formerly condemned, though without the  
 ingenuity

ingenuity of acknowledging the light they were forced to follow.

But though Mr. *Douglas* did not think it adviseable to attack the doctrine contained in this book, he could not help discharging his bolt at the author. The conclusion, it seems, does not please him, and therefore it ought not to please the public. So we are to reason, and so we are to conclude, it seems; for so Mr. *Douglas* is pleased to subscribe; and Mr. *Douglas* is all-sufficient and unerring: witness his own most incomparable letter!

But even Mr. *Douglas* admits that the physician is not accountable for the success of his *recipe*, on a supposition that every physician acts to the best of his judgment: whether this accession is made in tenderness

derness to Dr. *Thomson*, is another question. Other great men have died besides Mr. *Winnington*, and under other hands, without any such inquisition after their blood. And it is fit that some umbrage should be provided for their miscarriages ; but whether Dr. *Thomson* is allowed the benefit of it, or not, it would indeed be hard for a doctor to be hanged because he is a blockhead ; in which case, I am afraid the college would meet with more difficulties, than at present they do, in putting off their *diplomas*. I do not know the certain price of a *diploma* from our learned college here in *England*, but I can venture to affirm, that the honour of being prosyndic of *Padua*, is only to be acquired by a long course of study and application, and by a superiority of learning and knowledge ; and altho' that title

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may sound strange and outlandish to Mr. *Douglas*, it is in better esteem with men of sense, and gentlemen who have seen more of the world, than perhaps he has had an opportunity of doing. And I must beg leave to inform him, it can never redound to his reputation to despise merit, though it be ever so uncommon or outlandish to his apprehension.

Mr. *Douglas* is very angry with the profyndic, for acquainting the public with the nature of his prescriptions in *English*; and would from thence infer, that he is unacquainted with the power and virtue of medicine, but such a preposterous and absurd inference needs no aggravation; and is not this in support of the craft?

After

After a great deal of puzzling and labour to point out the errors of Dr. *Thomson*, in his manner of treating Mr. *Winnington's* Case, and after a rhapsody of nonsense, and a torrent of foul and abusive language, he says, ' I now begin to give over all thoughts of convincing you.'

Indeed Mr. *Douglas* might have given over these thoughts much sooner; for, in charity, I will honestly assure him, that after all the fatigue he has undergone, he has only fully convinced every one, who has had patience enough to read his letter, that he is as much a stranger to physic, as good manners.

It was not my intention to have taken so much notice of this scurrilous and abusive letter, but I must own my indignation was roused, when I was informed that this Author struts at the Coffee-houses, and with an air of satisfaction receives the compliments of some of the faculty on his most excellent performance, with their congratulations for his wonderful success. But this is something like the *French* maxim of singing *Te Deum* after the loss of a battle.

The conclusion of Dr. *Thomson's* pamphlet runs thus :

‘ If I have introduced any thing  
 ‘ new, either in the discipline or  
 ‘ practice of physic in this king-  
 ‘ dom,



‘ dom, not supported by vain hypo-  
 ‘ theses, but founded upon reason,  
 ‘ and agreeable to the maxims of  
 ‘ the antients, I see no reason why I  
 ‘ should be opposed in so outra-  
 ‘ geous a manner : But, if I have  
 ‘ erred, it must be confessed, I have  
 ‘ now generously given my ene-  
 ‘ mies an opportunity of indulging  
 ‘ their malice. And indeed when  
 ‘ it is considered how intimately the  
 ‘ welfare of mankind depends on a  
 ‘ right practice in physic, it is cer-  
 ‘ tainly the duty of every professor  
 ‘ to expose all deviations from it.  
 ‘ It therefore remains with my ac-  
 ‘ cusers, either to justify their cla-  
 ‘ mour by my conviction, or esta-  
 ‘ blish my reputation by their con-  
 ‘ fusion.

This is a fair and generous chal-  
 lenge to the faculty ; and none of  
 Dr.

Dr. *Thomson's* real accusers have hitherto been hardy enough to accept it ; for, although these champions, and some others, have stepped forth, it is evident that they are only mercenaries, too obscure to have any interest of their own in the cause, and are much beneath the doctor's notice.

Two of them, who call themselves *Campbell* and *Dowman*, were never heard of before, nor perhaps ever will again ; and the other, since he is become a letter-writer, is too well known to be regarded.

I should have been glad to have seen the president *Dr. Mead*, or some other eminent members of the college, fairly engaged in this dispute, that mankind, in an affair that so intimately concerns their welfare,  
might

might have had the satisfaction Dr. *Thomson* has, on his part, so generously offered to afford them.

It is to such gentlemen that Dr. *Thomson* has addressed himself, and until they shall think fit to patronize the present Discipline, and condemn his Practice in physic, I am persuaded that every impartial and unprejudiced person will agree with me in opinion, that Dr. *Thomson's* reputation stands established by their confusion.

*F I N I S.*



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